

A new perspective on obviation from attitude contexts

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Introduction: Languages from the Algonquian family exhibit a morphological pattern called *obviation* which applies to animate third-person referents within and across clauses. Within a clause, at most one referent is proximate (an unmarked designation), while all others are obligatorily obviative marked. Across clauses or sentences, obviation has consequences for restrictions on co-reference: The null pronoun *she* in the Ojibwe example in (1) either refers to the subject *Ziibiins* or the object *Adikoons*, depending on whether it is proximate (1a) or obviative (1b), while its English counterpart is principally ambiguous (see Rose-Little & Moroney 2016 for a formal implementation of these effects). One common view of obviation motivated by these facts is that obviative marks non-topics (e.g. Grafstein 1984). In our presentation, we argue on the basis of novel fieldwork data from attitude contexts and particularly *attitude ascriptions* in Ojibwe that obviation primarily encodes *perspective*.

- (1) Ziibiins andawendam wii-waabamad Adikoons-an, onzaam idash ...
Ziibiins wants DESID-see Adikoons-OBV but ...
'Ziibiins_i wants to see Adikoons_k, but ...'
- a. aakozi
sick.PROX
'she_{i/(*)k} (prox) is sick'
- b. aakzoi-wan
sick-OBV
'she_{*i/k} (obv) is sick'

Data: One environment where perspective is grammatically encoded is embedding under attitude predicates like *think*. For such cases, it is often assumed that the attitude holder constitutes the default *perspective center*, the person whose speech, thoughts or feelings are being reported. However, attitude reports can come in different varieties, depending on the relation an attitude holder bears towards themselves (= the attitude ascription). Here we focus on cases in which (i) an attitude holder refers to themselves in a self-conscious way (*de se*) or (ii) refers to themselves by accident without being aware that she is doing so (*de re*). An illustration of the former—which we take to be the default—is shown in (2). In this case, co-reference of a (null) pronoun in the embedded clause with the attitude holder in the matrix clause is possible when both are proximate (2a) but prohibited when the pronoun is obviative (2b).

- (2) *De se context*
Adikoons is at a game night with her friends. For one game everyone has to draw a picture. When Adikoons sees her picture afterwards, she says, "I'm a bad artist". Later in the evening, when Adikoons already left, Makwa is talking to another friend about what happened. Makwa says:
- a. Adikoons inendam mamaazhi-d mezinibii'ige-d
Adikoons thinks bad-3 IC.draw-3
Adikoons_a (prox) thinks she_a (prox) is bad at drawing
- b. *Adikoons inendam mamaazhi-ni-d mezinibii'ige-ni-d
Adikoons thinks bad-OBV-3 IC.draw-OBV-3
intended: Adikoons_a (prox) thinks she_a (obv) is bad at drawing

However, in a context in which the attitude holder is unaware that she is talking about herself, as illustrated in (3), it becomes possible to mark the pronoun as obviative despite the attitude holder being proximate (3b). On a topicality view of obviation, this effect is not accounted for insofar as it is unclear how this change in context could affect the extent to which Adikoons is no longer topical. Rather, it provides evidence for a perspectival account. Since the attitude clause in (3b) no longer reports Adikoons's attitude, given that

the respective proposition is not part of his beliefs, proximate marking is no longer obligatory. Rather, we assume the attitude clause to report a belief of the speaker, Makwa, who is aware of Adikoons’s co-referential accident, and thus allow the possibility to shift from proximate to obviative.

(3) *De re context*

Adikoons is at a game night with her friends. For one game everyone has to draw a picture while wearing a blind fold. Afterwards the pictures get shuffled, so no one knows whose drawing is whose. When Adikoons sees her picture, she says “Whoever drew this is bad at drawing”. Later in the evening, when Adikoons has already left, one of her friends Makwa, who was in charge of the game and knew whose picture was whose, was talking to another friend. Makwa says:

- a. Adikoons inendam mamaazhi-d mezinibii’ige-d
Adikoons thinks bad-3 IC.draw-3
Adikoons_a (prox) thinks she_a (prox) is bad at drawing
- b. Adikoons inendam mamaazhi-ni-d mezinibii’ige-ni-d
Adikoons thinks bad-OBV-3 IC.draw-OBV-3
Adikoons_a (prox) thinks she_a (obv) is bad at drawing

Proposal: We propose to model the semantics of obviation in terms of indexicality. Much like *I* refers to the speaker of a context, proximate and obviative indicate that the marked entity constitutes or does not constitute the perspective center (PC) of a context respectively. To do so, we extend the context *c* to include a parameter for the perspective center, creating a tuple of $\langle \text{speaker}, \text{addressee}, \text{perspective center}, \text{time}, \text{location}, \text{world} \rangle$. The respective lexical entries are given in (4), where proximate and obviative take an entity as argument to capture their suffixal nature, being modifiers of type $\langle e, se \rangle$, and contribute their meaning as a definedness condition. The shifting behavior in (3b) can then be captured in terms of indexical shift, via an operator introduced with the attitude verb, only that it shifts the context to that of the speaker rather than that of the attitude holder, due to the *de re* attitude.

$$(4) \quad \text{a. } \llbracket \text{PROX} \rrbracket^{c,i,g} = \lambda x : \text{PC}(c) . x \qquad \text{b. } \llbracket \text{OBV} \rrbracket^{c,i,g} = \lambda x : \neg \text{PC}(c) . x$$

$$(5) \quad \llbracket \text{OP}_{\text{PC}} \rrbracket^{c,i,g} = \lambda p \in D_{\langle \kappa, \kappa \rangle} . p(i)(c^{PC_i, PC})$$

Interestingly, Ojibwe does not shift first person indexical (6a). The fact that Ojibwe has distinct agreement for matrix and embedded clauses, known descriptively as the conjunct and independent orders, controls for the possibility of a quotative reading of (6a), which only appears when the matrix agreement is used (6b). On the multiple operator view, this means that perspective is located below the speaker (Deal 2017).

- (6) a. Ziibiins(-an) inendam(-an) gichi-gikendaaso-yaan
Ziibiins(-OBV) thinks(-OBV) very-smary-1
Ziibiins_a thinks that I_b am very smart
*Ziibiins_a thinks that I_a am very smart
- b. Ziibiins(-an) inendam(-an) nin-gichi-gikendaaso
Ziibiins(-OBV) thinks(-OBV) 1-very-smary
Ziibiins_a thinks, ‘I_a am very smart’
*Ziibiins_a thinks, ‘I_b am very smart’

Conclusion: We provided a novel proposal for obviation in Ojibwe according to which obviation encodes perspectival properties. This account is in line with recent research on a wide variety of languages that also emphasizes the role of perspective (e.g. Sundaresan 2012 for Tamil, Charnavel 2018 for French, Hinterwimmer & Bosch 2016 for German). While our data and claims are restricted to Ojibwe, we hope that our proposal can be extended to more Algonquian languages and shed light on other cross-linguistic phenomena.